ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A method and system are disclosed for storing, retrieving and otherwise handling two and/or three dimensional image data forming a picture or image. The picture is defined by a plurality of levels, each level including a plurality of subpicture areas corresponding to a different level of image data resolution relative to image data resolution levels corresponding to subpicture areas in other levels. The method and system include selecting a subpicture element having image data for inclusion in the picture and identifying a subpicture area in which the subpicture element may be placed. The method and system further include placing the image data of the subpicture element in the identified subpicture area. Upon a determination that the amount of image data in the identified subpicture area exceeds a predetermined maximum amount following the placing operation, the system and method identify overlapping subpicture areas in a level corresponding to the next higher image data resolution level that overlaps the identified subpicture area. Following the identifying operation, the system and method place image data of one or more subpicture elements from the identified subpicture area into at least one of the overlapping subpicture areas.